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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Monday, July 10, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "CARING FOR ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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One of the joys of having electric appliances is that they are very easy to care for. The manufacturer, as a rule, sends with each piece of equipment the directions for operating it correctly and economically. He also tells the purchaser if any special care is needed. If these directions are followed faithfully the new conveniences should last well and give no trouble.

Unfortunately, housewives sometimes put these directions away and forget all about them. The Bureau of Home Economics sums up most of them as follows:

Operate the appliance as instructed. Keep it clean. Cover it when it's not in use. Oil as required. And watch the cord that connects the appliance to the source of current. Repair or replace it promptly if it becomes worn or frayed.

Now for some specific points.

When you disconnect an appliance cord, always grasp it by the plug-- not by the cord itself. Rough handling is hard on the fine wires inside the cord, and will eventually cause them to break. Then they may cut through the protective covering in which they are wrapped -- the insulation.

The cord should not be twisted or bent. Bicycle tape may be used to wrap a cord where it has become worn -- to prolong it's life temporarily. But at the first opportunity such a cord should be replaced. Anyone who understands how the wire is attached to the plugs can do this. And a new cord is not expensive.

If you have an electric washing machine, never overload it with clothes or water, says the Bureau's equipment specialist. When you start the machine, first start the motor. Then throw the machine into gear. When you stop the

machine, throw it out of gear first -- then turn off the motor. Always leave the wringer rolls with the tension released. Rinse the tub and the washing mechanism in it, and dry them before leaving the machine for the day. Between washdays, leave the drain faucet open, and prop the lid up an inch or two to allow free circulation of air. Coil the connecting cord where it will not collect moisture or dirt.

While it is important to keep a washing machine clean, the Bureau warns homemakers against using coarse, harsh scouring powder to remove stains on the inside of the tub. Use whiting or some other very fine scouring agent instead. The greenish compound called verdigris -- which often forms on copper tubs -- can be removed by a paste made of whiting and oxalic acid. This acid is a poison. So keep it out of the way of the children and pets. Soapsuds and ammonia also will remove verdigris. And to keep the steel or iron frame from rusting, rub it occasionally with oil.

Wringers, like washing machines, should be wiped dry or they will deteriorate. The rubber rollers may be wiped off with a cloth moistened with a few drops of kerosene -- to remove discoloration. But -- be sure to wipe off every trace of kerosene afterwards. For if kerosene is left on -- it will cause the rubber of roller to soften. The gears of the wringer need occasional oiling -- according to the manufacturer's directions. And it's a good idea to cover the wringer with a dust bag when you are not using it.

And here's a word about electric irons.

Always disconnect an iron when it's not in use. Keep its sole plate or in other words its bottom surface -- clean. And do not scratch this bottom surface. Store the iron in a clean, dry place where it will not rust. And keep it covered.

Many new irons have automatic temperature regulators that need only to be set at a proper temperature for ironing different fabrics. But if the iron

doesn't have this device, the only way to keep the iron from getting too hot is to pull out the plug or to snap off the outlet switch once in a while.

So much for the electrical laundry appliances. Now -- about vacuum cleaners.

Clean the dust bag of a vacuum cleaner regularly -- about once a week.

Brush it inside and out, but never wash it. Washing will remove the finish that makes it dust-proof. Do not pick up glass, pins, or metal objects with a vacuum cleaner. They may chip the fan blades or make holes in the dust bag. If the motor sparks, it is usually because the carbon brushes are worn and need replacing. Keep the vacuum cleaner in a clean place, protected from dirt, rust, or insects that might eat the bristles of the brushes or the felt padding.

Women who have electric ranges say that it is easy to keep the enameled parts clean by simply washing with soap and water. A very mild abrasive -- such as whiting -- may be used. Clean the stove only when it is cold. Polish nickel parts with metal polish or whiting.

If food spills on the cooking unit of an electric stove, this may easily be removed. The method depends on whether the cooking unit is the open type -- or whether it is enclosed.

If the unit is enclosed -- simply wash the food off after the stove cools. If the unit is open -- put a pan of water or food on the unit. During the process of heating this -- the food that has been spilled will char. Then when the unit cools off, simply brush the charred particles off with a soft brush.

And the last piece of large electrical equipment I'm going to mention today is the refrigerator. This needs but little attention. Of course, the food compartment needs cleaning whenever anything is spilled -- and at regular weekly intervals. And from time to time -- the refrigerator must be defrosted. Cover all moist foods in the refrigerator. Place foods on shelves so that air can circulate around them. If you leave home for a long time, disconnect the refrigerator from the house current. Some types of refrigerators need the attention of a service man if they are disconnected for a long time. That's something your dealer can tell you.

And those are all the suggestions from the Bureau of Home Economics -- for taking care of electrical appliances -- that I have for this broadcast.

